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UNFPA SUPPORT FOR AND COLLABORATION IN THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Report of the Executive Director

1. This report is being submitted to the Executive Board in response to the request made at its third regular session, 11-15 September 1995, to consider, at its first regular session in 1996, on the basis of a written report, UNFPA's support for and collaboration in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

2. As one of the six co-sponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNFPA has been intimately involved in the process of its development, which culminates with the programme becoming fully operational on 1 January 1996.

3. UNFPA's support to the programme has been articulated at meetings of the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations; through the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the

Joint Programme; through distribution to all UNFPA staff of a letter from the heads of the six co-sponsoring agencies; and by an indication of the financial contribution to the Joint Programme in the UNFPA intercountry programme proposal, 1996-1999 (document DP/1995/44), which was approved by the Executive Board at its third regular session in September 1995 (decision 95/37).

4. While taking an active role in all the discussions that have ensued over the course of 1994 and 1995 in the development of the Joint Programme, UNFPA has taken care to ensure that support for HIV/AIDS prevention activities continues to increase in its own ongoing programmes and projects, particularly at the country level. In 1994, UNFPA supported HIV/AIDS prevention activities (including supply and distribution of condoms; HIV/AIDS prevention information, education and communication (IEC) activities; and HIV/AIDS training) in 103 countries throughout the world. (Further details of this support can be found in the 1994 AIDS Update, which will be made available to the Executive Board at the January session.) As in the past, the Fund will continue to provide such support in line with national AIDS prevention and control programmes and within the context of the theme group mechanism being set up at the country level by the Joint Programme. UNFPA will work to ensure that its support responds to the specific needs of individual countries and that it is used to support interventions that are effective in reducing the further spread of the epidemic.

5. The Fund's support for HIV/AIDS prevention activities was initiated in the mid 1980s, and policy guidelines for support in this area were issued in 1987. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) clearly identified prevention of HIV/AIDS as one of the components of reproductive health programmes. The Fund has subsequently revised its policy in this area and issued guidelines on UNFPA support for reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health. These revised guidelines clearly recognize HIV/AIDS prevention as an integral component of support to reproductive health. The Fund's support will continue to be focused at the primary care level and will continue to concentrate on interventions that will better enable individuals to reduce the risk of HIV transmission through sexual intercourse, from an HIV infected woman to her fetus and through exposure to HIV-infected blood and tissue. Components for support could include the provision of equipment and supplies; development and dissemination of IEC materials; the provision of training; and support for research, as appropriate.

6. In 1994, UNFPA's estimated total support for HIV/AIDS prevention activities was $15 million at the country level and $0.5 million at the intercountry level.

7. At the global level, UNFPA has consistently advocated and promoted the establishment of a single source within the United Nations system that would have responsibility for providing policy, strategic, operational and technical guidance on all aspects of HIV/AIDS. UNFPA has

also argued for a prioritized global research and development agenda that is driven by the needs of countries. UNFPA looks forward to being a partner in the process of developing such guidance and is fully committed to ensuring that the outputs of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS are integrated or mainstreamed into its own policies and programmes. Again, as in the past, the Fund does not intend to initiate any global programme of activities within UNFPA itself but will work through the Joint Programme.

8. UNFPA's support to the Joint Programme so far includes the secondment of a staff member since December 1994 and the provision of a grant to the HIV/AIDS task force for the production of the biennial report on global activities. As mentioned above, the intercountry programme report presented to the September session of the Executive Board included an indication of likely support over the next four years, and a project request from the Joint Programme is currently being processed.

9. In summary, UNFPA, in agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO), considers that family planning, maternal care, prevention of abortion and prevention of reproductive tract infections including sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS are the four most important components of reproductive health. By promoting and supporting effective interventions in these four areas UNFPA will continue to work towards securing and safeguarding reproductive health for everyone.